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COVER: of a mandarin square of the fifth rank, Ming Dynasty.
 Gift from Schuyler V. R. Cammann in memory of Dr. Carl Schuster.
 Textile Museum 1970.11.5a. (Color plate courtesy of Ralph S. Yohe.)

The views expressed by the authors are their own;
 they do not necessarily reflect those of the Textile Museum.



Fig. 1 Embroidered brownish-red gauze five-clawed dragon robe. T. M. 1973.30.1. Gift from Brig. Gen. Regan Fuller.

RECENT GIFTS OF CHINESE AND JAPANESE TEXTILES

MARY V. HAYS

In recent years the Textile Museum has had a remarkable increase in gifts of Chinese and Japanese textiles. By coincidence, these gifts have come at a time when the diplomatic and cultural exchanges between the United States and The People's Republic of China have created a popular interest in things Chinese. Therefore, it is timely and appropriate to describe a few of these acquisitions and as an introduction to discuss some of the cultural aspects of the Chinese textiles and costumes.

Little attention has been given to the collecting of East Asian textiles. Yet for almost two centuries, the diplomatic corps, the armed forces, missionaries, teachers, tourists, and importers have brought back textiles. After the collapse of the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1912, the impoverished Manchu and Chinese families found it necessary to sell their household goods. As a result there were a great number of textiles available and some of

these came into Western collections. These altar cloths, chair covers, hangings, and clothing were once an intrinsic part of a Chinese family's wealth and their use was restricted to specific religious and social purposes. In the Western home they became decorative household furnishings and were hung on walls, covered tables, pianos, chairs, and pillows or were worn as evening wraps and fancy dress costumes. As a result they disintegrated from the constant exposure to dust, moisture, and light. After half a century of such use, Chinese textiles in good condition are scarce.

Through the interest of Mrs. Matthew W. Stirling, anthropologist and Trustee of the Textile Museum, the collection of Mrs. Stuart J. Fuller, who lived for many years in China, was brought to the attention of the Museum. Her sons, Major General Regan Fuller and Mr. Stuart J. Fuller, Jr. have given the collection in memory of Mrs. Fuller.

Dr. Schuyler V. R. Cammann has presented a Ming gauze mandarin square as a memorial to Dr. Carl Schuster. Mrs. Thomas Arms, who lived in China and Mrs. Marcia T. Lystad, who lived in both China and Japan, have made numerous gifts. Mrs. Alan Ferguson has presented a Japanese *kesa* to the Museum.

These gifts increase the scope of the Museum's East Asian textile collection so that scholars

are provided with the necessary materials for studies in design, craftsmanship and costume styles and will give visitors the opportunity to view the various types of textiles and costumes used in religious and social ceremonies.

The culture of the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1912) was based on a sedentary society with a rigidly classed structure consisting of members who were responsible for the performance of prescribed religious, political and social rituals. This society had both the need for and the means to produce a great variety of elaborate hand crafted textiles for use as garments, ritual objects, or decorative items. Viewed in this light, the Ch'ing culture is as far removed from contemporary life as is the culture of Ancient Egypt or Peru. Thus an embroidered red gauze five-clawed (*lung*) dragon robe (Fig. 1) in the Fuller gift becomes an extremely important acquisition. This robe is brownish-red gauze of the type sometimes designated as *leno*,¹ and called *ro* by the Japanese. The manner in which the cosmic universe is depicted on the robe suggests that it was made in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century for a prince of the first rank.² It appears to be complete except for a narrowing of the lower sides of the skirt, probably done when the sides were sewn together to make an evening coat.

The collar, lapels, and cuffs of dark blue plain gauze are the original ones since the embroidery designs reproduce in miniature those used on the body of the garment. The sleeves, also of dark blue plain gauze, have twelve stripes of couched³ gold wrapped thread, each stripe consisting of three threads. Except for the gold thread woven into the braid and tapes that bind the cuffs, collars, and lapels, this is the only gold used on the garment.

All embroidery is done in satin stitch⁴ with the hidden under panel as exquisitely worked as the rest of the garment. The palette consists of all the colors of the spectrum with the blues used in embroidering the five-clawed (*lung*) dragons being predominant. The clouds are in four colors, red, yellow, blue, and green, with a fifth color, lavender, added to the "cuff clouds". The red bats are drawn in two distinct styles and those that skim over the waves are more compact than those in the sky. Flowers and Taoist symbols appear among the clouds. The central mountain, which is divided into three separate parts is surrounded by sacred fungi, peaches, and chrysanthemums. Among the waves are coral, swastikas, cash, lozenges, scrolls, *ju-is*, musical stones, precious jewels, and rather unusual large jagged rocks, which are embroidered in the blues used for the dragons. (Fig. 2) The upright water (*li shui*) on the bottom of the robe

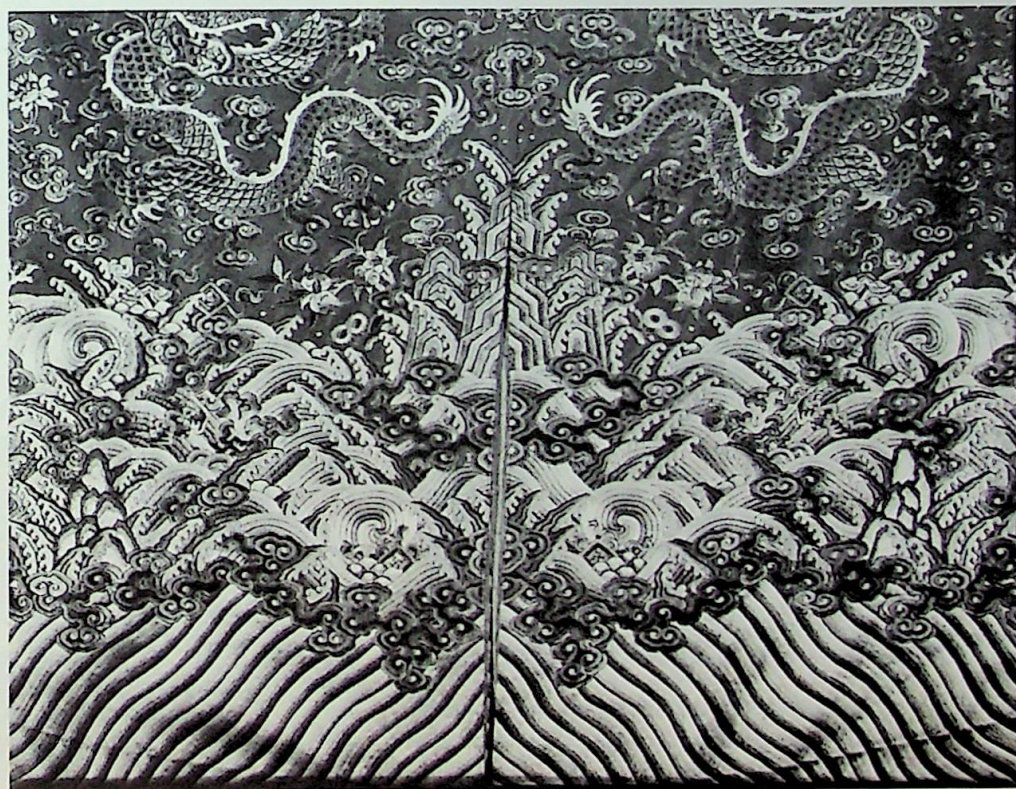


Fig. 2 Detail of skirt of robe in Fig. 1 showing the central mountain, lucky symbols, and large jagged rocks.



Fig. 3 Embroidered blue satin five-clawed dragon robe. T. M. 1973.30.2. Gift from Brig. Gen. Regan Fuller.

measures approximately ten inches. The robe is fifty-eight inches from neck to hem and is lined with imperial yellow plain weave silk.

Another dragon robe (Fig. 3), also in the Fuller gift, probably dates from the last half of the nineteenth century. It is dark blue satin with nine five-clawed (*lung*) dragons in gold wrapped thread couched with red silk thread. The robe is complete with matching cuffs, lapels, and collar, on which appear the same small crane medallions that are found on the body of the robe. The Manchurian crane, symbol of longevity, was a design often used on birthday robes. Flying among the clouds are green bats carrying red swastikas in their mouths, a punning motif that implies great happiness. The eight Taoist symbols are embroidered in very fine Chinese knots.⁵ The rest of the embroidery is in satin stitch including the many lucky symbols that float upon the waters which surround the short, compact mountain, five inches in height. There are cash, coral, ingots, scrolls, flaming pearls (rather unusual), *ju-is*, rhinoceros horns, swastikas, musical stones, lozenges, and water dragons with

pearls. The upright water (*li-shui*) is straight, narrow stripes measuring fourteen inches. The sleeves of navy blue plain weave have thirteen stripes, each formed by three narrow tucks. The robe is lined in pale blue plain weave silk.

Also in the Fuller gift is a woman's dark blue dragon vest (Fig. 4). All nine birds that appear on the civil rank badges, mandarin squares, are to be found embroidered on this over garment. Reaching to the knees and completely open at the sides, it is permanently fastened together at hip level by plaited woven tapes. On the left side these terminate in two streamers.

The garment is designed to open down the front, thereby permitting the embroidery that encircles the neckline to form a cloud collar. The cosmic motifs on this garment follow the basic scheme of a dragon robe. The dragons and the outlines of the cloud collar are worked in couched gold wrapped thread. All other motifs are in satin stitch. A blank area, front and back, is reserved for the mandarin squares which denote the rank of the wearer. At the hemline is a deep multicolored

macramé fringe terminating in tassels. The brilliant green bats that flit among the clouds and the use of an outer row of eight and an inner row of six gold wrapped threads in the couching of the cloud collar suggest a garment of the late nineteenth century. The wide binding that partly obscures the embroidery is a later addition.

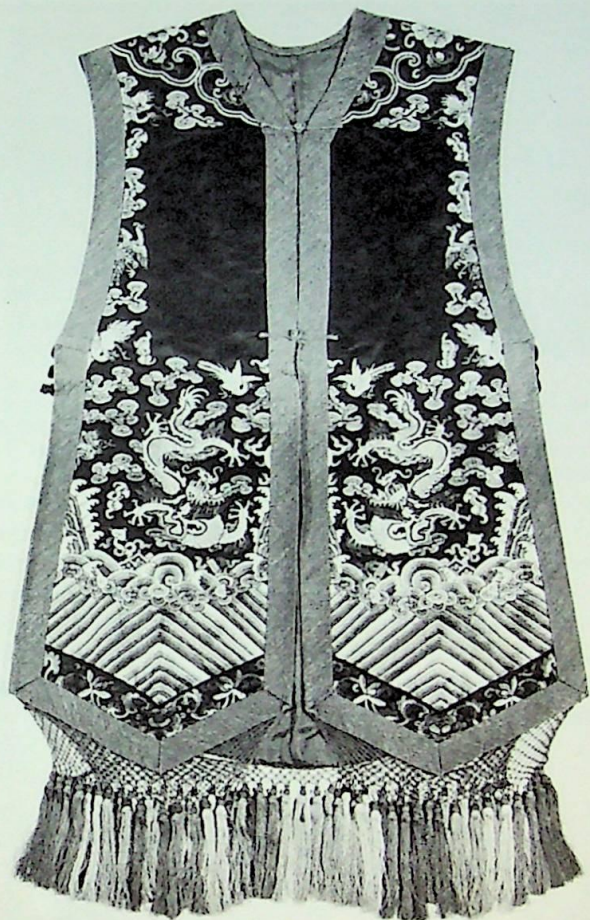


Fig. 4 Embroidered dark blue satin woman's dragon vest. T. M. 1973.12.1. Gift from Stuart J. Fuller, Jr.

Two items in the Fuller gift, one from China, the other from Japan, are decorated with variants of the same theme, children at play. The "hundred children" motif, used so often by the Chinese on wedding hangings and bed furnishings, is used here on a red damask valance embroidered in satin stitch. (Fig. 5) The ingenious design permits a graceful movement of the children across the banner, while the artistry of the embroiderer depicts each child so skillfully that his charming or mischievous personality is evident. The valance

measures six feet across the top and is two feet in depth. The date is probably late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

On a black chirimen crepe kimono (*furisode*) (Fig. 6) is a Japanese interpretation of the same theme. Here the playing children are depicted on the lower part of the garment. They pull flower carts, wave banners, blow horns, beat drums, catch butterflies, romp with a dog, and wrestle playfully among many lucky symbols and flowers. The technique used is Yuzen dyeing, sometime referred to as "painting with dyes" and involves the use of stencils and resist pastes in the dyeing process. Parts of the design are highlighted with embroidery using satin stitch, Chinese knot, and couched gold wrapped thread. As in the Chinese hanging, the presence of many children is a wish for numerous progeny. Therefore, this may be a wedding kimono. Black was used for formal or ceremonial kimono in the Taisho Period (1912-25). It is lined with vermilion plain weave silk.

Another Japanese textile in the Fuller gift is a brocaded Buddhist priest's stole, or *ohi*. (Fig. 7) Worn draped over the left shoulder, it matched the rectangular robe or *kesa*.⁶ The red satin, (now faded to orange) is patterned with white weft



Fig. 5 Detail of a red satin valance embroidered with the "hundred children" motif. T. M. 1973.30.3. Gift from Brig. Gen. Regan Fuller.

threads cast in long floats across the face of the fabric to form chrysanthemums of sixteen petals. Each float is tied down with geometric precision using very fine warp threads of the same color. Each flower petal is outlined in flat gold or silver thread, from which the metallic surface has disappeared. Small square patches in each corner are green satin with a diapered background of black and gold against which sixteen-petaled chrysanthemums in flat gold thread are outlined in black or brown. Traditionally, these patches were taken from a treasury of old and cherished fragments. They represent the kings of the four heavens, the *Shi-tennō*, who dwell in the paradises of the north, east, south, and west. Both fabrics are from the Edo Period (1615-1867), the stole probably dating from the eighteenth century. Although the Museum has several *kesa*, this is the first stole to come into the collection.

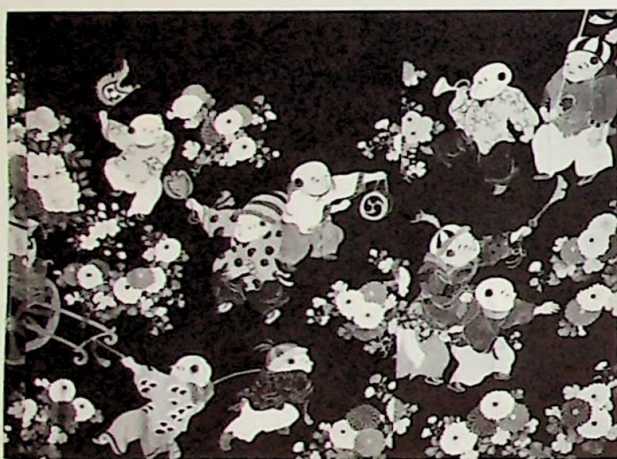


Fig. 6 Detail of Japanese kimono (*furisode*) showing children at play. Yuzen dyeing and embroidery. T. M. 1973.12.5. Gift from Stuart J. Fuller, Jr.

In memory of Dr. Carl Schuster, Dr. Schuyler V. R. Cammann presented to the Textile Museum a mandarin square⁷ of exceptional interest and rarity dating from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). (Figure 8 and color cover). The insignia of a fifth rank military official, a large bear with head facing left as worn, is embroidered on white simple gauze in vertical alignment in tapestry stitches of multi-colored silks and gold wrapped thread. The presence of symbols on the body of the bear and on the flames issuing from it is unusual. The symbols surrounding the figure are broadly selected and freely arranged. This freedom vanishes in the Ch'ing Dynasty and all rank badges conform to a highly stylized and repetitive cosmic scheme.

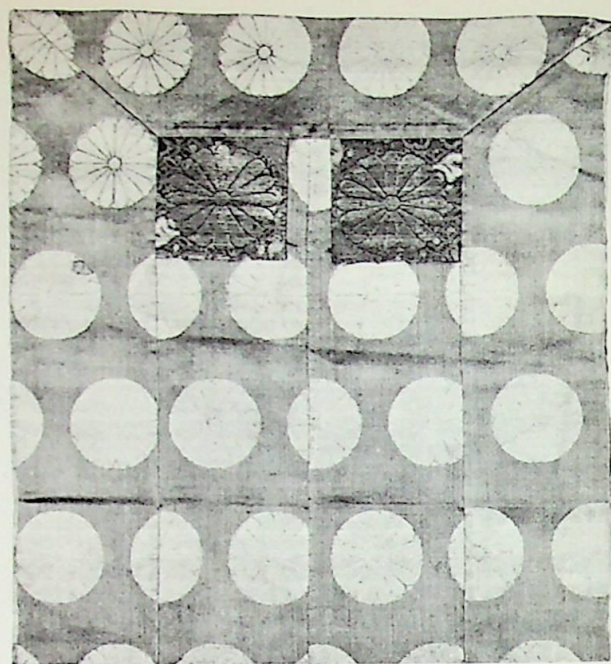


Fig. 7 A part of a Japanese Buddhist priest's stole, or *ohi*. Red satin brocaded with white sixteen-petaled chrysanthemums. T. M. 1973.12.4. Gift from Stuart J. Fuller, Jr.



Fig. 8 A mandarin square of the fifth military rank, a bear embroidered on white gauze. Ming Dynasty. T. M. 1970.11.5a. Gift from Dr. Schuyler V. R. Cammann in memory of Dr. Carl Schuster. (Also reproduced in color on the cover.)



Fig. 9 A mandarin square of the ninth civil rank, a paradise flycatcher embroidered in Chinese knots. Ch'ing Dynasty. T. M. 1973.18.2a. Gift from Mrs. Marcia T. Lystad.

Nevertheless, Ch'ing suppression did not completely break the artistic spirit of the costume designer as two pairs of civil rank badges given by Mrs. Marcia T. Lystad show. Of the late nineteenth century, they are fine examples of two different techniques used in this period. One pair, (Fig. 9) badges of the ninth civil rank, bearing a paradise flycatcher, is blue satin completely embroidered in Chinese knots, except for the couched gold wrapped thread that outlines the eight Buddhist symbols, two bats, and the water. There are no rocks or flowers at the sides of this square, possibly because the one inch border of gold meanders or key patterns and lotus is wider than usual.

The second pair was designed for an official of the first civil rank. Couched in gold and silver wrapped thread on brown satin, a Manchurian crane perches upon a rock against a fretted background filled with flowers, Taoist symbols, and five bats. At the sides flowers grow among fantastic rocks. All are worked in couching including the meander or key border. Both pairs of mandarin squares are for a man because the bird's head as it gazes at the sun is turned to the right as worn.

Among other gifts of Mrs. Lystad are two unusual boy's black kimonos in finely woven plain weave silk. One kimono (Fig. 10) with intricately patterned designs of samurai arms and armor is the product of Yuzen dyeing, highlighted by quite extraordinary embroidery. The sophisticated palette is in browns, tans, pale orange, and yellow.

The second kimono has designs in a freer form, suggestive of ink painting. Cranes fly among mists, trees, rocks, and water in blues, greys, sepia, and black with gold dust accents. Further study is necessary to determine the dyeing technique used. On both kimonos the designs occupy an area fifteen inches deep around the midriff and across the lower part of the sleeves. The family crest, or *mon*, is different on each kimono. Both probably date from the first half of the nineteenth century.

Several gaps in the Museum's collection were filled by gifts from Mrs. Thomas Arms. A red satin bride's coat of the late nineteenth century has the mandarin square as an integral part of the embroidery. The coat has many flowers and butterflies all embroidered in satin stitch in blues and whites, except for the greens, reds, and yellows used on the mandarin square of the seventh rank, a mandarin duck. Couched gold wrapped thread in a meander or key design outlines the badge. There are no sleeve bands on this garment.

The Chinese cloud collar is one of the most graceful objects of personal adornment. The Arms' gift includes a spectacularly beautiful cloud collar (Fig. 11) with a color scheme of blues and greens embroidered on white satin with narrow black satin bindings. In the embroidered designs are charming little green katydids and praying mantis among blue fungi, magnolias, begonias, grass orchids, and peonies. It is worked in satin stitch except for the couched gold wrapped thread that forms the leaves of the flowers. It dates probably from the late nineteenth century.

Sometime between 1918 and 1922, when Mrs. Arms was living near Peking, she bought an overskirt (Fig. 12) of twelve embroidered streamers from a peddler. Garments of this type often sold for



Fig. 10 Detail from boy's kimono showing samurai arms and armor. Yuzen dyeing and embroidery. T. M. 1973.18.5. Gift from Mrs. Marcia T. Lystad.



Fig. 11 Chinese cloud collar. Embroidery on white satin. T. M. 1973.7.3. Gift from Mrs. Thomas Arms.

more if they were divided into separate parts and it is rare to find a complete skirt. Careful examination raises several questions: Is this skirt complete? Red wedding overskirts have streamers of this type and in addition two large panels, one with a phoenix, the other with a dragon. Is this an overskirt for a theatrical costume or a garment for a young woman? The colors of the streamers and the flowers embroidered on both sides are suggestive of the four seasons. The three pink streamers are embroidered on one side with autumn chrysanthemums, on the other with gardenias (?); three blue streamers have winter narcissus on the back and summer lotus on the front; three springtime yellow streamers have camellias on one side, peonies on the other; and on the three seagreen streamers there are summer grass orchids on the front, peonies on the back. The same stylized leaf and vine is used with each flower and each V-shaped tip is bound in narrow black tapes. The multicolored embroidery is in satin stitch with accents of Chinese knots.

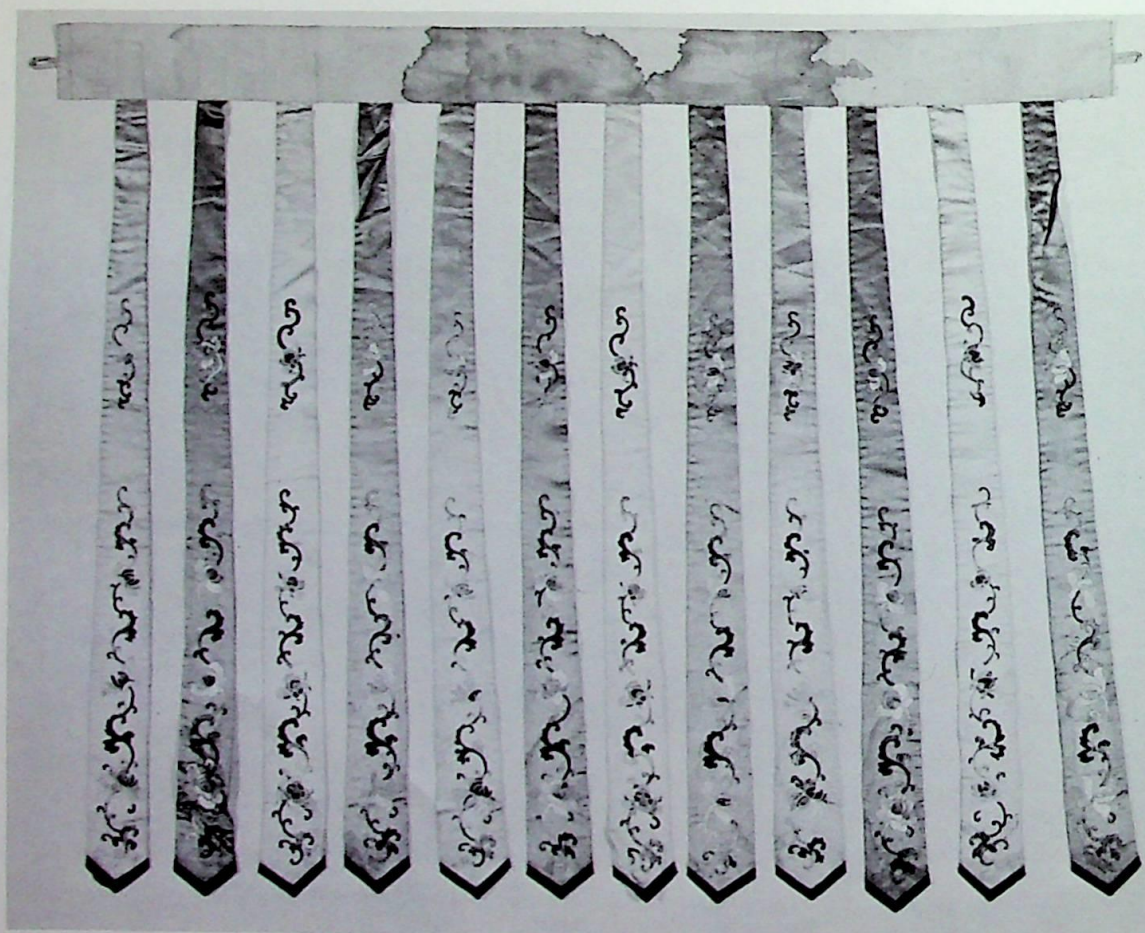


Fig. 12 Chinese overskirt of 12 embroidered satin streamers. T. M. 1973.7.6. Gift from Mrs. Thomas Arms.

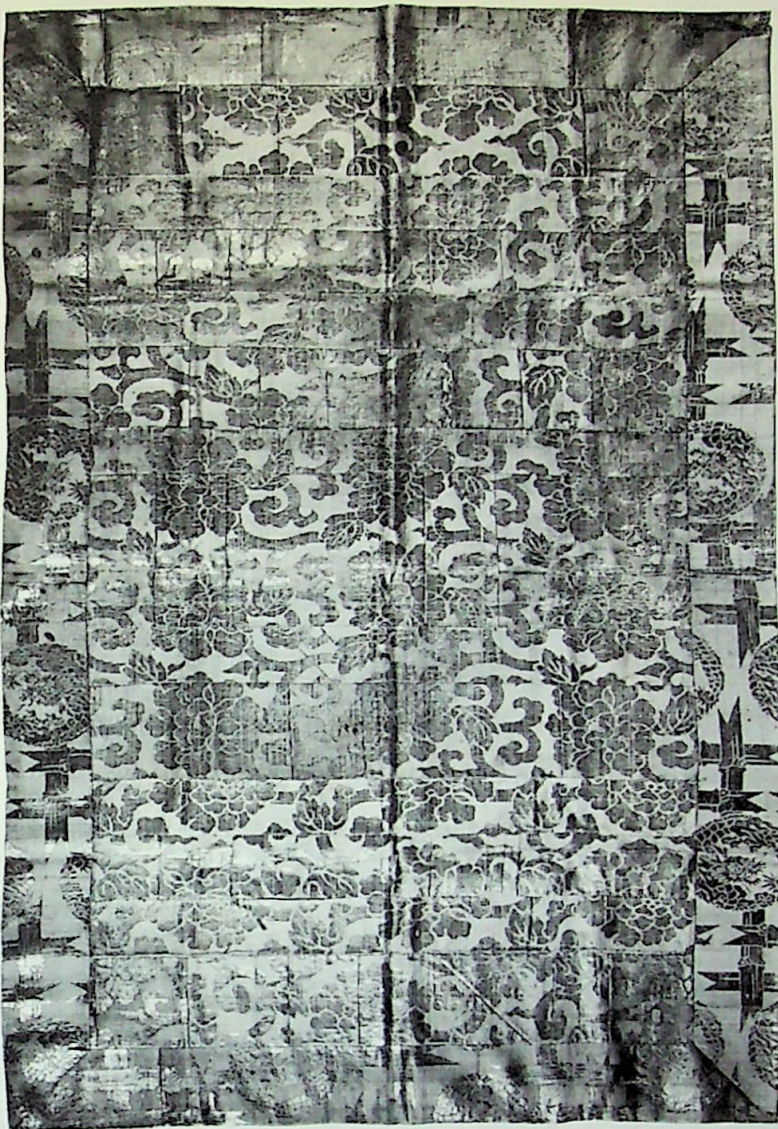


Fig. 13 Brocaded red satin Japanese Buddhist priest's robe, or *kesa*. T. M. 1973.9. Gift from Mrs. Alan Ferguson.

Among the thirteen items given by Mrs. Arms, a red satin chair cover is remarkable for the variety of symbols used in the intricate designs. There is a seemingly endless stream of wishes for a happy, prosperous, and a fertile married life interspersed with the puns⁸ that so delighted the people of the late Ch'ing Dynasty. It is embroidered in couched gold wrapped thread with some details in red, blue, green, and white satin stitch. Occasionally a single motif is outlined in black.

A gift of Mrs. Alan Ferguson is a red (now faded to brownish orange) brocaded satin *kesa*, or Buddhist priest's robe. (Fig. 13). It has been

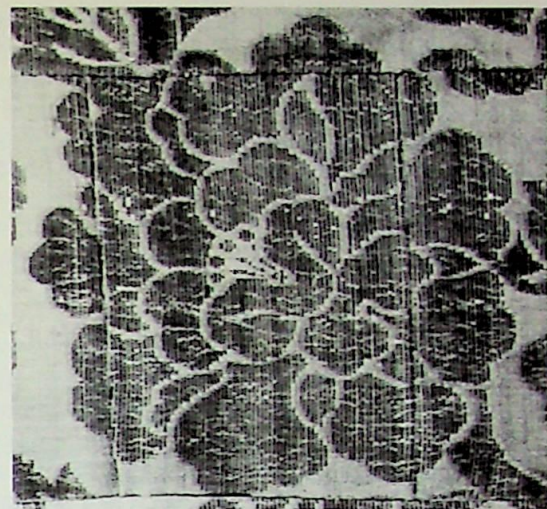


Fig. 14 Detail of *kesa* in Fig. 13 showing the traditional "patches" and the large peony flowers.

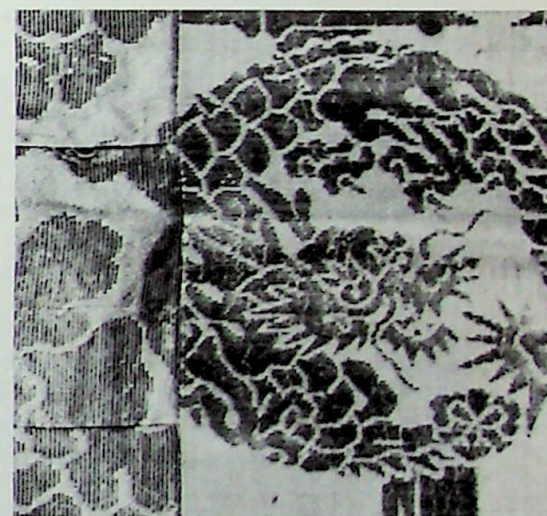


Fig. 15 Detail of *kesa* in Fig. 13 showing the alternating circle and square motifs.

suggested that the robe was worn by priests of the Shin or Tendai sects and is Hachiman brocade woven only at Nishijin, Kyoto. A *kesa* is a toga-like robe, rectangular in shape, made of patches, symbolic of the Buddha's poverty. Four corner patches represent the four kings of heaven, the *Shi-tennō*, as on the *ohi*, or stole described earlier. On this *kesa* they are made of the same material as the robe. The fabric design of large peonies (Fig. 14) (seven inches in diameter), leaves, and tendrils is brocaded in flat strap gold thread. The light falling upon this "patchwork" garment produces an effect quite different from that reflected from an

uncut fabric. Great artistry is required in cutting and assembling the patches. This *kesa* is unusual because it has a wide border of a similar fabric but with a completely different design. It is red satin, also faded, brocaded in flat strap silver thread, with alternating designs of bamboo canes forming large

open squares, and roundels of a three-toed dragon clasping a *mon*, or family crest. (Fig. 15) These brocades may date from the first half of the Edo Period (1615-1867). This *kesa* deserves further study as do the other twenty *kesas* in the Museum's collection.

NOTES

¹Irene Emery, *The Primary Structures of Fabrics*, The Textile Museum, Washington, D. C., 1966. pp. 190-192.

²Schuyler Cammann, *China's Dragon Robes*, The Ronald Press, New York, 1952, p. 54.

³See Emery, *op. cit.*, p. 247 for description of this technique.

⁴Throughout this article the term "satin stitch" is used in a general rather than a specific sense. The term "plain stitch" is applicable but its connotation seems too comprehensive for Chinese embroidery.

⁵See N. Victoria Wade, *The Basic Stitches of Embroidery*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1966, p. 20 for an explanation of this stitch, which should not be confused with French knots. This stitch is also called Peking knot or Forbidden Stitch. Peking knot is a misleading term because the stitch is used throughout China.

⁶See Helen Benton Minnich, *Japanese Costume*, Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vt., 1963, pp. 196-197 for a discussion of the *kesa* and *ohi*.

⁷The two most comprehensive works on mandarin squares are: Schuyler Cammann, "The Development of the Mandarin Square" in *The Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, v. 8, no. 2, August 1964 and Schuyler Cammann, "Chinese Mandarin Squares: Brief Catalogue of The Letcher Collection" in *The University [of Pennsylvania] Museum Bulletin*, v. 17, no. 3, June 1953.

⁸Cammann, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-107.

Photographs are by Raymond L. Schwartz.

MARY V. HAYS and her husband, Ralph Hays, have been collecting and studying Chinese textiles for thirty years. In 1960 when Mrs. Hays, a librarian, left the Library of Congress to devote more time to her family, she began a systematic study of this subject. Kimonos of the Tokugawa Period exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1956 led her to the study of Japanese textiles and the acquisition of a collection of *kesa* and *fukusa* in 1971. In 1972 and 1973 she spent many hours at the Textile Museum assisting with the Saturday morning textile appreciation sessions, cataloguing Chinese textiles, and researching gifts in this field.

In the past five years Mrs. Hays has studied collections in museums throughout the United States, Great Britain, and Europe. When Mr. Hays retired in 1973, they spent a year in England and on the Continent before moving to San Francisco.